

Executive Director Report – 29 July 2024

Financial Notes

June 30, 2024, Board Financials – Preliminary FY24 Spending Wrap-up

Board Financials, pages 3 and 4, include the monthly and Year to Date actual spending. For FY24, we ended the year well under budget. Here are the notable budget items for last year:

- Travel, Conferences, and Continuing Education: Budgeted \$71,350, Spent \$9,776.40 or 13.7% of total
 - Travel resumed in spring 2024 and I expect we'll use more of this GL in FY25
- Public Relations: Budgeted \$11,500, Spent \$775 or 6.7% of total
 - We will purchase additional materials for the 'Bug Us' campaign this year
 - **Board Members: Anything else RSA should be doing PR wise that would help members?**
- Commercial Insurance: Budgeted \$8.700, Spent \$3,757 or 43.2% of total
 - Mostly due to Cyber insurance coming in far lower than expected
- Computers, Software, Supplies, Postage, Printing: Budgeted \$27,325, Spent \$5,030 or 18.4% of total
 - Didn't buy any computers or major software which is the majority of total expenses
 - Will begin purchasing staff hardware, software, and more in late FY25 as we transition to RSA provided IT
- Professional Services: Budgeted \$169,285, Spent \$24,102 or 14.2% of total
 - Legal expenses came in less than expected
 - Didn't hire a consultant to help with Ill Independence tasks
 - Intend to hire HR, Payroll, Benefits, and IT consultants this year; we need experts
 - Post independence much of this budget line will shift to paying for IT and software currently provided by RAILS, which will cost RSA more
- Contractual Services: Budgeted \$451,323, Spent \$352,359 or 78.1% of total
 - RAILS services over grant amount
 - SirsiDynix and other contracted vendors
 - Future projects money

Overall, RSA spent 84.2% of our budgeted expenses. The previous FY excess funds remain in short-term savings. We will convert excess short-term cash into long-term CDARS after the audit.

FY24 Audit Dates & Information

RSA's annual audit will be conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA) 26 – 30 August. Most of my work is pre-audit and already in process. As we get closer to the start date, we'll get more documents to fill out or review. CLA has a massive amount of documentation for each major process that spells out our financial dealings, IT practices, and more. I usually spend about 2 full days reviewing and updating these documents after RAILS finance and IT have filled in their parts. Other than answering a few oddball questions during the audit, we are not involved much during the week of the audit. RAILS Finance takes really good care of us and does most of this work.

RSA FY25 Invoicing Update

We are late sending out invoices this year due to the NFP to Ill cutover, needing the budget approved by the Board, and now by audit work happening in RAILS Finance. Last Thursday Antony

and I met with RAILS finance to review all the text included with our annual invoices. Since we amended our membership cost structure this year and changed our name, we felt it was a good time for a full review. Finance will begin processing invoices for Public, Academic, and Special libraries the week of August 5th. School libraries will be processed in later August.

Invoicing fun facts as of 1 July 2024:

- 10 Members are invoiced quarterly (Jul, Oct, Jan, Apr)
- 4 Members are invoiced semi-annually (Jul, Jan)
- All other RSA members are invoiced annually
 - Typically, Publics, Academics, and Specials are invoiced in July
 - Typically, Schools are invoiced in August after staff return for the new year

RIP Updates: Ongoing Topics & One-Offs

A listing of major RSA Independence Project (RIP) to-do areas RSA Admin need to complete in FY25. The list will be redefined over the next year as we progress through the process.

Timeline & Punch List

- Build the overall timeline and topical punch list for the overall staff employment process. We're basing this on experience of PrairieCat and SWAN's independence projects as well as what we learn from outside parties and, in the future, consultants. This needs a lot of work.

IMRF

- Contacted Randy Stevens, IMRF Employer Services Team Leader. He forwarded the request to someone in IMRF who is supposed to send us information on how to join. We've tried this twice over the past 2 years with no result. He asked us to contact him again on 2 Aug if we hadn't heard anything from them by then.

LIMRiCC

- Talked to Sharon Swanson at RAILS who is on the LIMRiCC Board. She forwarded us to their Benefits Coordinator to get information on how to start the process to join. We're emailed her and are awaiting a response.

Mission Square

- Reached out to the RAILS representative about setting up a new account for RSA. He forwarded us to the person who runs this process. We are rading through their materials now. They are proposing almost the same program as RAILS currently offers.

Payroll & Other Benefits

- Thinking has occurred. We will need outside help to successfully complete these tasks.

Staff Handbook & Policies

- Same as payroll. Makes sense to start with RAILS policies and work backwards into RSA policies. We will also need assistance here.

Staff Pay Scale

- We intend to rework the RAILS pay scale down to fewer levels to better fit RSA. This will happen in conjunction with other staffing and benefits processes.

Job Descriptions

- We have begun reviewing existing and thinking about new job descriptions. Our goal is for all non-supervisory staff to be hourly. RSA operates as if all non-supervisory staff are hourly now. During the past 3 RAILS job description reviews, going back to around 2014, all non-

supervisory staff have either swapped from hourly to salary or salaried to hourly. The job descriptions didn't change drastically; neither did their responsibilities, just how they were interpreted during the outside job reviews.

- The plan is to build 3 levels of responsibilities for both cataloger and operations roles. For example, Cataloging Specialist, Cataloging Coordinator, and Senior Cataloging Coordinator, all supervised by the Cataloging Supervisor. This provides flexibility to hire new staff with lower levels of skills or experience and move them up as well as the option to promote existing staff into a higher position without the supervisor leaving.
- Update job descriptions will probably need to be checked by outside parties. We may also want to do a benchmarking process too. A note on benchmarking; RAILS just finished doing a full benchmark on our current positions and had issues finding other relevant cataloging positions to benchmark against.

Computers, Software, IT Infrastructure

- We need to migrate away from our Salesforce Help Desk no later than the end of November. We've done a small amount of research on replacements and ruled a couple of products out.
- We'd like to set up a Microsoft Office 365 account for RSA and hope to license it in such a way that we can offer one email per library to replace the RSA Gmail accounts. This would allow us to truly manage these important accounts which we can't do with free Gmail accounts. We'll need an expert to set this up and for periodic administration tasks.
- If Office 365 is ready by June, RSA staff will move to RSA's email domain, librariesofrsa.org, on 1 July 2025 to coincide with the employment change. This would be the ideal time to make this switch.
- Zoom, telephones, laptops, printers, and everything else RSA Staff use to do their job will be moved to RSA accounts and ownership as it makes sense to do so. We can continue to utilize some RAILS IT infrastructure through June 2026.

Consulting & Contracts

- We've been working with SirsiDynix to get new contract terms. Our current contract ends on 28 Feb 2025. I have asked for a full reexamination of our system costs, refigured them using their current pricing methods. Once that is finished, we'll review and remove any contracted items we're not utilizing, then look for a final annual figure. We expect the final figure to be less than our current contract.
- SirsiDynix is aware we intend to issue an ILS RFI to look at the state of library automation software in 2026. Depending on findings, we might do a formal RFP process for a replacement system. However, it is still to RSA's benefit to negotiate a new 5-to-7-year contract extension with an option to drop the contract at the end of year 2. Signing a longer contract allows us to benefit from 2024 pricing and the resultant longer timeframe and gives us additional pricing leverage. We can work a 2-year contract extension if needed, but if we do so we can't expect a lower overall price.
- **Consulting: We hope the Board will pre-approve RSA Administration finding and contracting experts in various fields to ensure we get the best possible support as we take on many, many new tasks involved with directly employing RSA staff. We have money budgeted for this purpose.**

Conversion to III Cleanup

- We continue to work on making the name change with our vendors, on our contracts, and in all the other places it appears. Based on previous experience starting in 2010/11, this will be a multi-year odyssey.

- Converting from a Not for Profit means new contracts and levels of service and access in most of the software products we use. In almost every case that means moving from free or mostly-free services to paid services. We are generally grouped into the education level of vendor contracts and payment levels.

Administrative Updates

Office Utilization Plans & Updating Hybrid Work Schedules

We forwarded the Office Utilization proposal approved by the Board at the 17 July meeting to RAILS. They expected this and were ready with the steps we need to take to implement the changes. RSA supervisors will revise existing agreements to reflect the updated hybrid work schedule. We intend to run the new schedule through the end of the year to gather more information. Supervisors will meet in late December and January to determine if we need to tweak the schedules, make larger changes, and to renew the agreements through the end of our RAILS employment in June. RAILS HR will review and approve our changes after we submit them in early August.

Outreach Campaign

Staff continue to push to increase RSA to member outreach and member-to-member interchanges. We bring additional 'Bug Us' sticky notes and flyer handouts on library visits. We heard from members that they reached out to us because of the 'Bug Us' campaign explicitly saying it was OK to do so. While it's always been OK to contact us, massaging that we are 'here for you' appears to encourage more questions.

We're thinking about some additional messaging and wording to help kickstart member use of the email groups. We need to better explain what they are and why they can be of use. Once we've got the wording down, we'll be sending out reminder/helper emails to all the main groups to remind the staff included in each one that they can easily ask questions and get advice from all around RSA.

System Updates, Projects, Issues

RSACat Mobile 2

We are working with SirsiDynix to set up a testing instance of RSACat Mobile 2 (SirsiDynix's BLUEcloud Mobile 2). We are early in the process and Sirsi is still in beta on this product, with an expected fall roll-out. RSA has been asked to participate in their testing as we're one of their largest consortia. We believe this new app will allow each library to have a more personalized header and maybe more.

RSACat Online Payments

We will be enabling online bill pay in all public library RSACat Profiles over the next few months. All libraries already have online payments via the RSACat Mobile app now. Only 24 members enabled it when we rolled it out. Patrons from most public libraries use it via the RSACat Mobile app.

RSACat Header Name/Logo Updates

As part of the RSACat Mobile 2 setup, we think we will be able to set up some type of theme per library for free. That, combined with some library name changes over the years, means we'll be reaching out to members to check and update their RSACat profile headers (name, logo, and color)

and ensuring we match the members wishes for the look of the header. We'll then match as well as we are able, the RSAcat Mobile 2 'skin' for each library.

Automatic Renewals of Materials

We've had the ability to enable automatic renews for several years now but only Normal PL took us up on this when we rolled it out. During parameters parties, we've found six additional libraries just in the Eastern region alone that are very interested in turning this feature on. RSA will work with the libraries to ensure their circulation rules are compatible with this. We look for standardized checkout periods of 2 weeks with 1 or 2 renewal or 3 weeks with 1 renewal to keep the overall checkout and auto renewal periods from getting out of hand.

Completed RSA Events: Training & Visits

July's list of training and visits, in-person or virtual, is included below. This information will also find its way into the RSA Newsletter. Publicizing training and visits will help spread the word that we're back out visiting libraries. It may also make it easier for us to get appointments with those less inclined to want them if they see that we're out and about everywhere.

Location	Campaign Name	Campaign Type
Cambridge PL	FY25 New Director Visit	Member Services
Heyworth PLD	FY25 Parameters party	Member Services
Chatsworth PLD	Parameter Party	Member Services
Danvers TL	FY25 Parameters Party	Member Services
Zoom	FY25 Holds Workshop	Member Services
Chenoa /Zoom	FY25 Parameter Party	Member Services
Towanda	FY25 Parameter Party	Member Services
Virginia MPL	FY25 New director visit	Member Services
Lexington / Zoom	FY25 Parameter Party	Member Services
Lillie M Evans Library	Board Meeting July 17 2024	Governance
Virginia Memorial Public Library District	Cataloging Site Visit	Cataloging
Atlanta PLD	Parameter Party	Member Services
Farmer City PL	FY25 New Director visit	Member Services
Pontiac PL/Zoom	FY25 Parameters Party	Member Services
Neponset Public Library	Cataloging Site Visit	Cataloging
MT. HOPE-FUNKS GROVE LIBRARY / Zoom	FY25 Parameter Party	Member Services
Carthage/Zoom	Online Basic WorkFlows Cataloging Workshop	Cataloging
Prairie Creek PLD	Parameter Party	Member Services
Hudson Area Public Library	FY25 Parameter Party	Member Services
Maquon DPL	Maquon New Directors Visit	Member Services
Gridley PLD	FY25 Parameter Party	Member Services

Cataloging Department Report – 29 July 2024

Progress on the Annual Cataloging Theme

This year's theme is "Connecting with Catalogers," involving several aspects:

- Rework of the Basic WorkFlows Cataloging Workshop and potentially the Bibload Workshop to encourage more libraries to participate.
Starting in September and continuing monthly through the end of CY2024, the Basic WorkFlows Cataloging Workshop will be offered as a four hour, single day session on Zoom. In early August, watch the Cataloging in WorkFlows email group for an announcement of the fall workshop dates. These workshops will also be posted on [L2](#). In CY2025, the Basic WorkFlows Cataloging Workshop will continue to be taught monthly as a four hour, single day session, but on a quarterly basis, the workshop will be taught in-person at RSA libraries instead of on Zoom. RSA is targeting later this fall to begin WorkFlows Item Group Editor training. After that, attention will shift to reworking the pre-requisite videos for the Bibload Workshop.
- Launch of the RSA Technical Services Membership Group and email list after RSA becomes an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality on July 1, 2024.
The new RSA email groups were officially launched earlier this summer. The signup and selection form for the email groups is available [here](#). In addition to those who subscribed to the email groups on their own, RSA has subscribed library staff who attended recent Database Committee meetings and those who use individual WorkFlows cataloger accounts to the cataloging email groups.
- Start of RSA Cataloging Membership Updates to replace Database Committee meetings -- targeting three per year to share important information with cataloging staff.
These cataloging-focused membership updates will be called RSA Cataloging Chats. The first Cataloging Chat is scheduled for Friday, September 27, 2024 from 10am to noon on Zoom. Registration is available [here](#). RSA plans to host Cataloging Chats in January, May, and September.
- Official launch of RSA cataloging site visits.
These visits are underway! Remember you can request a cataloging site visit [here](#) by choosing the cataloging option on the form. These visits are the perfect opportunity to learn about cataloging "hot topics" and allow plenty of time for you to ask any cataloging-related questions. We hope you will consider connecting with us, whether in-person or virtually! RSA will also be reaching out to libraries we have not heard from recently to see if they would be interested in a visit.

Progress on the Cataloging Request Backlog

The Cataloging Maintenance Center (CMC) continues to work on the cataloging request backlog for braille, encoding level 8, and encoding level M records, upgrading them to full bibliographic description in OCLC, improving searchability in WorldCat, WorkFlows, and the RSAcat. The plan is for the CMC to finish the RSA backlog by the end of CY2025.

Since the May 9 Users Group meeting, the CMC has processed:

- encoding level 8 requests = 381

- encoding level M and braille requests = 433

1,054 cataloging requests remain to be processed in the backlog, submitted as far back as April 2017.

Progress on Brief Record Upgrades

Since the last Users Group on May 9, the RSA cataloging department has upgraded 898 brief records to OCLC records with full bibliographic description. RSA is currently upgrading brief records entered into WorkFlows in April 2023.

Cooperative (Co-op) Collection Procedure

In response to a recent question from an RSA library joining the Tri-County Large Print Co-op, the Cooperative (Co-op) Collection Procedure has been reworked to make it easier for participating libraries to manage co-op items in WorkFlows. Some RSA libraries arrange an agreement with other libraries to rotate their collection, such as large print books, on a fixed timetable. The reworked Co-op Collection Procedure is available [here](#). Please contact the RSA Help Desk with any questions.

Blank Item Categories 6-10

When you catalog a new item in WorkFlows or load an OCLC record into WorkFlows, item categories 6-10 should automatically default to the UNDEFINED value. Using UNDEFINED is important so items with categories 6-10 will be visible to BLUEcloud Analytics and WorkFlows reports.

RSA has discovered during cataloging site visits that many libraries with items assigned blank categories 6-10 are using an old version of WorkFlows. When these libraries catalog a new item in the old WorkFlows, item categories 6-10 are not available on the WorkFlows screen, so the cataloged item appears with blank categories 6-10 in an updated WorkFlows.

Whether a library is using the latest or old version of WorkFlows, when they load OCLC records into WorkFlows, item categories 6-10 automatically default to UNDEFINED due to the back-end configuration of the database.

To check your WorkFlows number to make sure you are using the latest version, do the following:

1. Log into WorkFlows using the CIRC, an individual cataloger, or TECH account (if the latter is still enabled for your library).
2. Go to the Help menu at the top of the screen.
3. Select About.
4. Check the bottom of the blue SirsiDynix logo to ensure the version number is 4.1.0.0.1367.

Please contact the RSA Help Desk if you need assistance upgrading your WorkFlows. Make sure WorkFlows is updated on all computers at your library.

RSA plans to create an automated script that will routinely batch edit items with blank item categories to UNDEFINED. No timeframe is available when the script will be ready because it will need to be custom built by SirsiDynix.

Operations Department Report – 29 July 2024

Parameters Parties update

As previously mentioned, In July the Operations Department started work on the Parameters Parties. These were announced at the last Users Group. The team started by making appointments for the 20 public libraries in the Eastern Region to have interviews. The option was given for them to be in person or virtual. At time of writing, 12 of these interviews have happened and another 6 have been scheduled for the next week or so. All of the work arising from one of the Parties has been completed and work is ongoing for the other 11. We are following up with the other two libraries to get them scheduled. We have also started reaching out to the Southern region libraries to get their interviews scheduled. Six of the 21 libraries in Southern have been scheduled so far. Some public libraries have “jumped the queue” and had their party early because they have a new director, and we are now using the same format for New Director visits and Parameters Parties. This is in no small part because the format for the Parties was based on the New Director visits. Four libraries from other regions have jumped the queue in this way. One of these is now complete and three more have work ongoing.

What have we learned?

Part of what we learned from this process is that once we have completed the current round of Parties hopefully around the end of the year (with schools and academics to follow in the spring) it will be necessary to turn this project into an ongoing one. It is thought that we will put libraries on a three-year rotation so that we can ensure that we don’t lose touch with their operations. I am developing an internal procedure document so that we don’t forget what we learn about doing the Parties by the time we start on this regular 3-year cycle.

We are gathering a lot of data. There are 55 questions in the questionnaire and although not all of them generate work to do each interview generates as many as 6 cases in our ticketing system. The parties so far have generated 69 cases at time of writing, 32 of which have been closed. Information gathered is being used to update circulation and holds maps, customize various drop downs, correct some item types, hours and preferences in RSAcat, and to build out the new member database which I have been developing over the last few months. One of the most striking trends is that 8 libraries so far have expressed interest in turning on autorenewals.

Operations Manual, Documentation Index and Support Site

The Operations Manual was published to the website and an email sent out to the whole membership. It can be downloaded here: <https://support.librariesofrsa.org/handbook/operations-manual/>. I requested feedback from members so that we can incorporate suggestions into future versions.

I am currently working on the 7th version of the Documentation Index. The Documentation Index went live on the support site back in February. It now lists just over 300 documents written by RSA staff and published on the support site. The organization of the Index has been designed to reflect that of the support site. The average age of these documents is currently 37 months. We are working on updating and adding documents to this collection. Approximately 20 new and revised

documents were uploaded to the support site in June and July including the Operations Manual and the WorkFlows Supervisor Set Up Guide which Sara revised, updating the previous version from 2008. This work will continue as documents which need revision are identified and new ones are created in response to queries we receive from the membership.